

The tax rebates passed in H.R. 5140 will put money back into the pockets of American families, and in turn, back into the American economy.

I am extremely supportive of the Senate amendment, which extended the rebates to 20 million seniors and 250,000 disabled veterans. During this time of economic uncertainty, no one should be left out of this stimulus package.

While today's stimulus package is a good first step to revitalizing our economic well-being, checks in the mail alone are not going to get the job done. Recently, after Maytag and Carhartt, among others, moved their operations from Illinois, yet another plant in my district announced it was closing its doors, costing us another 700 jobs.

My constituents need more than just a check. They need fair trade policies that do not provide incentives for companies to outsource jobs to other countries. My constituents need an overhaul of the Trade Adjustment Assistance program and increased funding in order to establish the safety net they deserve. My constituents need unemployment benefits to help them survive long periods of joblessness exacerbated by an unstable economy. I am extremely disappointed that we missed another opportunity to extend unemployment benefits to millions of Americans who are left out of this stimulus package.

Today's legislation is a good step toward addressing the hardships felt by many Americans, and I am proud to support it. I strongly urge the President to quickly sign this measure into law.

TRIBUTE TO IRAN "THE BLADE" BARKLEY

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 19, 2008

Mr. SERRANO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Iran Barkley, a towering local hero who defied the odds to reach the pinnacle of professional boxing excellence. Throughout his career, in times of triumph and heartbreak, Iran Barkley showed resilience and indomitable courage in pursuit of greatness. His gritty determination and willingness to stand toe-to-toe in the ring endeared him to fans worldwide, and often disproved critics who believed they were the last word on the outer limits of a fighter's ability.

Born in the South Bronx on May 9, 1960, Mr. Barkley, also known as "The Blade," was the youngest of eight siblings. Mr. Barkley's older sister, Yvonne, was an amateur boxer and lightweight contender in New York; she brought young Iran with her to local gyms as a way to keep him off the street. In the years that followed, under the tutelage of Connie Bryant, Bobby Miles, and with the friendship of another talented young fighter named Davey Moore, young Iran quickly demonstrated considerable in-ring ability. In 1981, Iran won the Empire State Games and was a finalist in the New York State Golden Gloves Competition. By 1982, he had joined the U.S. Amateur Boxing Team and traveled throughout Europe, medaling at the Copenhagen Boxing Club and the World Games in Munich, Germany. Shortly thereafter, Iran "The Blade" Barkley turned pro.

Mr. Barkley began his professional boxing career with an impressive 10–3 record. Through management changes and a controversial loss in his first World Title shot, Mr. Barkley later shocked the boxing world by defeating Tommy "Hitman" Hearns in a third round knockout to become Middle Weight Champion of the World. Mr. Barkley held this title until losing a controversial decision bout to Roberto Duran in what Ring magazine called "The Fight of the Year." Later, in part due to a string of injuries and managerial setbacks, Mr. Barkley's career would ebb and flow, with stunning victories sometimes paired with heartbreaking defeats. All told, however, this Bronx born boxing phenom would go on to be a five time World Champion, winning titles in three weight classes, and holding the distinction of being the only man ever to beat Tommy Hearns twice. In heavily contested and physical bouts, "The Blade's" mettle earned him the respect of his opponents.

His relentless and efficient punching power thrilled boxing enthusiasts around the globe, and his ring accomplishments have left little doubt in the minds of boxing historians as to his abilities and class.

Madam Speaker, each February we honor the contributions of our African American brothers and sisters. We know that one month is hardly enough time to reflect upon the incalculable enrichments that African Americans have made to our nation. However, we also know that each time we pay special tribute to the legacies of African Americans, we move one step closer to fulfilling the promise of a free and equal society. The Bronx has always had, in my view, an embarrassment of riches in its African American community—so many heroes, so many fighters, so many champions of the people. But Iran "The Blade" Barkley is truly a legendary figure. His punching power has been matched only by his staying power in the world of professional sport. Unquestionably, he is an example, for all of us, of what can be accomplished through persistence, will and heart. I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing a giant in the world of professional boxing, and more, Iran "The Blade" Barkley.

HONORING MAJOR WILLIAM E. DICKENS

HON. GEOFF DAVIS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 19, 2008

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, today, I wish to honor a great man and a true American hero.

MAJ William E. Dickens serves as a chaplain in the United States Air Force Reserve. In 2005 and 2007, Major Dickens volunteered and was deployed to support the ongoing military efforts of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He has worked to establish a foundation of support for the troops in that region and continues to provide an invaluable service to military personnel and their families.

Major Dickens served as the senior Protestant chaplain at Kirkuk Regional Air Base in Iraq, providing a comprehensive ministry to more than 3,100 troops during his deployment. In 2005, while serving at Ali Al Salem in Kuwait, Bill visited more than 5,600 soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines. During his service

there, he made two convoy trips into Iraq to minister to 800 airmen at Camp Bucca who were without a chaplain. As the chaplain for the 445th Airlift Wing, Major Dickens has spent long hours providing reintegration counseling to service men and their families.

For his great service, Major Dickens was chosen as the Reserve Officers Association 2007 Chaplain of the Year. The Reserve Officers Association is a 70,000-member professional association with representatives from all seven of the uniformed services of the United States. This honor recognizes Chaplain Dickens' extraordinary contributions to the welfare, morale, and effectiveness of the armed services.

On the 12th of February, Chaplain Dickens provided the opening prayer for the House of Representatives. I ask the House to join me in congratulating Major Dickens on receiving this great distinction and in offering him our sincerest thanks for his years of service to our Nation.

THE STUDENT VETERAN FINANCIAL AID FAIRNESS ACT

HON. HARRY E. MITCHELL

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 19, 2008

Mr. MITCHELL. Madam Speaker, earlier today I introduced the Student Veteran Financial Aid Fairness Act, a bill to exempt service-connected education benefits from being figured into a veteran's financial aid needs.

This Congress has made education one of its top priorities. Last session, I proudly supported the College Cost Reduction and Access Act, which lowers student loan interest rates and increases Pell grants. This is an important step toward making a higher education affordable for all students. I was happy to see the President sign it into law.

Just last week, we continued our commitment to make a higher education more affordable by passing the College Opportunity and Affordability Act. Again, I proudly supported this legislation and was particularly pleased to support the important resources it provides for student veterans.

As a Member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, I have spoken to many veterans from my home State of Arizona and all around the country. These veterans have told me about the difficulties they face in readjusting to civilian life and they have consistently told me that the college environment is a good way to ease that transition.

Many student veterans are under different pressures than their non-veteran peers in college. Some have families of their own, some have full-time jobs, and most are a good deal older than the other students on campus. Additionally, many veterans, especially from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, are coping with injuries like post traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury.

And making matters worse, the rising cost of higher education is making it more difficult for veterans to go to college.

We promised a higher education to our servicemembers when they joined and it is our responsibility to see that they get it when they become veterans.

This is not the case, right now. When a veteran applies for financial aid using the FAFSA,

their G.I. Bill benefits are considered resources, which are then counted against the amount of aid they can receive. My bill would fix that problem and ensure that the G.I. Bill is used as intended, a benefit for military service, as opposed to a means to reduce the amount of student aid our veterans can receive.

The current law prevents student veterans from taking full advantage of Stafford and Perkins Loans, Pell Grants, and Federal Work-study. I believe it is critical that we continue to fight for college affordability, especially when it comes to providing for our veterans.

I think it is wrong to judge the needs of our veterans with the same standard as other students without military service.

I know Mr. FILNER, the Chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, has made it a priority to reform the G.I. Bill this session, but in the mean time, it is important that we work together as a Congress to fix this financial aid problem.

HONORING THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

HON. JOE SESTAK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 19, 2008

Mr. SESTAK. Madam Speaker, since 1920, the League of Women Voters (LWV) has fought for good government and an engaged, enlightened citizenry.

Founded by Carrie Chapman Catt just six months before the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified and women were afforded the right to vote, this vital organization works tirelessly to protect the democratic process in 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Hong Kong.

The League began as a "mighty political experiment" to help 20 million women carry out their new responsibilities as voters and encourage them to use their new power to shape public policy. As their mission statement demands, the League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization to encourage informed and active participation in government, increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influence public policy through education and advocacy.

Over its history, the League's legislative priorities have reflected the greatest needs of our society. Our victories in the House and Senate in addressing the concerns of Americans owe much to the efforts of those dedicated patriots of the League of Women Voters.

I would like to congratulate and honor the League of Women Voters on its 78th anniversary.

In the 7th Congressional District of Pennsylvania, I am fortunate to represent constituents from Delaware, Montgomery and Chester counties. In our district, the League of Women Voters is superbly represented by Ms. Lora Lavin and Ms. Norma Tower of Swarthmore Pennsylvania, Ms. Rosemary Kessling of Drexel Hill Pennsylvania, Gayla McCluskey of Radnor Pennsylvania, Susan Fields of Kemblesville, Pennsylvania, May Bell Ball of Flourtown, Pennsylvania, Suzanne F. Andrews of Norristown, Pennsylvania and Carol Snow of Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.

For their energy, dedication to the highest ideals of democracy and service to their neighbors, I request that we recognize this extraordinary organization and its members for their invaluable contributions to our great nation.

TRIBUTE TO DEAN MEMINGER MAYO

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 19, 2008

Mr. SERRANO. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor an important figure in the city of New York, a man whose voice reaches thousands of people, and who has consistently proven himself to be principled and fair in his judgment, Mr. Dean Meminger Mayo. In his professional capacity as a news reporter and anchor for the NY1 network, Mr. Meminger is charged with chronicling major events and other matters of importance to residents of New York. He approaches this work with a poise and professionalism beyond his years, and many have come to view his reporting as an unvarnished source of information upon which they can better comprehend the issues of the day. In his personal history as a native New Yorker, someone who has chosen to make our beloved city his home, we trust that the lens through which he views New York can be at once constructively critical and yet understanding.

Born in Harlem Hospital but raised in the Bronx, Mr. Meminger attended St. Augustine's Elementary School and later Cardinal Spellman High School. A bright and athletically gifted student, Dean was awarded a track and field scholarship to Pace University in Westchester, New York. While at Pace, Dean discovered both his love and talent for media and communications. He joined the college radio station as a disk jockey only to rise quickly to the position of news director. During his senior year of college, Dean interned with the Sports

Department of WABC-Eyewitness News, giving him exposure to professional news coverage and cementing his desire to make his mark in this field.

Mr. Meminger got his break in 1995, when he was hired by BronxNet TV as a reporter and substitute news anchor. Then in 1997, Mr. Meminger joined the team at NY1 News, one of the city's most watched cable news channels. Over the past decade while at NY1, he has covered some of the city's biggest stories, bringing to his coverage everything from sharp analysis to compassion, but always with the goal of bringing unbiased and clear reporting to his viewers. Recently, Mr. Meminger played an important role in reporting the events of a tragic house fire in the Bronx that claimed the lives of 9 children in two families of African immigrants. The painful events surrounding this story, coupled with a simultaneous national debate about U.S. immigration policy and enforcement, caused this family's personal loss to become a national story. For days, the whole of New York grieved with this family. And as the grieving process unfolded, Mr. Meminger was on hand to report the developments as they arose, helping us to understand exactly what had occurred and what was yet to come for these families and for their community. Sensitive coverage of wrenching events like the Highbridge fire have become Mr. Meminger's hallmark, but his history as a sought after resource during difficult events dates back to September 11th, 2001 and to the shootings of Amadou Diallo and Sean Bell.

Madam Speaker, Dean Meminger helps us to better understand and reflect upon the fluid state of affairs that we as New Yorkers all must learn to navigate. He is a proud man who possesses a keen intellect and an ever-growing capacity for insight. As an African-American, he inspires us, as people of color, when we see his face on television tackling issues that often cross color lines. The need still exists in America for greater acceptance in our society; for more, not less, tolerance and understanding. By being a positive and thoughtful voice in our city, Dean gains entry into our homes and earns our trust on a daily basis, and this, I am sure, is only a good thing. His profession requires that he not be an advocate for any one issue above another, but by virtue of his person, Dean advocates every day for multiculturalism and pluralism in this city. So on this February day during Black History Month, I ask that my colleagues join me in paying tribute to a man who is not only reporting, but also influencing history, Mr. Dean Meminger Mayo.